trian accidents have occurred as a result of which 139 persons lost their lives, 156 persons received grievious injuries and 210 minor injuries. The loss of property suffered in these accidents is to the tune of Rs. 35 crores:

(b) The main reasons for the train accidents are as follows:

(i) Failure of track, sudden rail fracture and sinkage of track due to heavy rains, etc.,

(ii) Defect in the mechanical equipment of the coach, wagon or locomotive like wheel, undergear or springs, etc.,

(iii) Staff failure.

(iv) Negligence of road users,

(v) Sabotage, and

(vi) Natural calamities and incidental causes.

The steps being taken to eliminate such accidents include renewal and rehabilitation of overaged assets like track, bridges, rolling stock, etc. In addition, inspection of track and examination of coaches, wagons and locomotives have been intensified. Ultrasonic testing of rails and axles is being done to identify fractures. Special emphasis is being laid on adherence to laid down procedures for reception and despatch of trains at stations. Besides, maintenance and upkeep of signalling equipment is also being given utmost attention. Drivers are being monitored and counselled about their driving techniques. Intensive training of running, maintenance and operating staff is conducted.

Sleeper Coach on Long Distance Trains

384. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the inroduction of sleeper coach on long distance superfast trains has put day long journey get the encroachments removed.

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have received a number of representations from M.Ps. and other public passenger associations in this matter; and

(c) if so, the details of the steps Government have already taken or prppose to take to ease the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) Passengers can travel in Sleeper Class during day time also with reserved Sleeper Class tickets.

(b) Representations have been received to provide more accommodation to Second Class short distance passengers and daily commuters.

(c) The number of Second Class unreserved coaches has been augmented in many long distance Mail/Express trains, depending on traffic justification and feasibility. In addition, 13 new trains have been introduced and the run of 14 trains has been extended. This is expected to cater mainly to the needs of the Second Class unreserved passengers, who undertake day long journeys as well as to the short distace passengers.

Occupying Railway land by private persons

385. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 42000 acres of Railway land is illegally occupied by private persons;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) No, Sir. The area of railway land illegally occupied is 4236 acres.

(b) Action is taken under the provisions of Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 to get the encroachments removeed.